

School and, indeed, to the whole community. In churches and stores you could hear excited conversations about the team's success.

In the end, they did not capture the State championship, but achieved something of greater and more lasting importance, the values of determination, hard work and courage in the face of adversity. In proving that history does not have to be destiny, they provided a very real example of the best of the American Dream and they lived at the heart of the American experience. Their school and their community are the better for it.

IRAQ STUDY GROUP REPORT

(Mr. COOPER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, the Iraq Study Group has completed its work. Now it is available for all Americans to read. I would urge everyone to pick up a copy. It is only 96 pages. It contains 79 recommendations, and it is a vitally important tool to inform the debate on Iraq.

Regardless of how you feel about this report, the men and women of this commission did a commendable job in reaching a consensus. If only the American people can do the same thing.

Voters voted for change. We will have change. And over the next coming weeks during the Christmas holidays, we need to inform the debate so that everyone can give us, your representatives, your opinion about how the war should be conducted or how it should be ended. So this is a very helpful tool. It is now available for everyone. I urge all of our citizens to pick up a copy.

HOSPITAL INFECTION CONTROL

(Mr. MURPHY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, while we are all talking and debating about the number of deaths in overseas wars, America has a dirty little secret in terms of the numbers of deaths that occur in our hospitals. About 90,000 people a year die from infections that they receive at hospitals or health care, at a cost of about \$50 billion to our health care system.

The November issue of the "American Journal of Medical Quality" said it costs about \$26,000 for each patient to treat those diseases. And it lasts an average of 20.6 days for a patient that has an infection, compared to 4.5 days without.

If we are really serious about controlling health care cost, it is not a matter of shifting the burden to having the government take it over, nor is it a matter of offering tax breaks just to carry health insurance.

This Congress, in this upcoming Congress, it is our duty, it is our responsibility

to finally start doing some things about reforming our health care system so we can make it a system that people can afford, and not one that is so overwhelming in cost that it ends up hurting citizens and, in fact, leading to their deaths.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DESERVE MORE

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, on a day when 10 more U.S. soldiers died in Iraq, raising the number of brave Americans killed to 2,900, it is hard to find anything positive to say about the Baker Report, anything which is associated with a war which was hopelessly wrong from the outset.

It was Congress that demanded the creation of a bipartisan group to critically examine the U.S. presence. At long last, the Congress, the American people, and the reluctant President have an Iraq plan to debate, except this President's interest has already begun to wane. He recently installed his own study group, which is a sign to me the President has changed his rhetoric but has not changed the course.

America cannot and must not deal with Iraq in 2007 in the same way this President dealt with it in 2006. America needed a plan for Iraq long before the U.S. went in there. Many of the 79 recommendations made should have been implemented years ago. One recommendation that is imperative from any hope of success, diplomacy involving Iraq and Syria, has been rejected by the President before it is even debated out here in the Congress. The American people and the American soldiers deserve better than that. This President has led them into this mess and we have, now, a chance to lead them out. And he rejects the recommendations before they are even discussed. We need better than that out of the Presidency.

GO BUCKEYES

(Ms. PRYCE of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise to accept Tuesday's challenge from the gentleman from Florida, who suggested that his Florida Gators will upset the undefeated number-one ranked Ohio State Buckeyes and our soon-to-be-declared Heisman Trophy Winner, quarterback Troy Smith.

In his ill-advised wager, the Congressman staked a crate of Florida oranges to a corresponding delicacy from the State of Ohio. I offer up a crate of peanut butter and chocolate buckeyes. But no such buckeye treat will ever reach his palate, for he will never savor the sweet taste of victory.

If the gentleman from Florida remains tragically optimistic about his

team's chances in Glendale, he should examine the fate of two other teams whose schedules placed them helplessly in the path of the mighty Buckeyes. The agony that permeates through the cities of Austin, Texas and Ann Arbor, Michigan should serve ample notice to the Honorable Gator Fan that Florida's berth in the 2006 Fiesta Bowl is not an opportunity for football immortality, but a certain footnote in Ohio State's storybook 2006 season.

INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE

(Mr. STUPAK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, 7.5 million Americans would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage. That is 7.5 million people who are currently struggling to make ends meet in an economy where job growth is slow, pay is falling, and prices are rising.

The minimum wage is currently at a historically low level in terms of purchasing power and at a striking 50-year low when adjusted for inflation. Hardworking families are currently struggling because this Republican Congress has refused to raise the minimum wage for the past 9 years.

Democrats believe that these millions of hardworking Americans deserve a pay raise to help them make ends meet in this tough economy. We believe that no one who works full-time in this country should have to live in poverty. They deserve a shot at the American Dream, a chance to give their family the opportunity to move ahead.

Mr. Speaker, within the first 100 hours of the new Democratic Congress, we are going to give these hardworking Americans a much-needed pay raise. It is time this Congress started expanding economic prosperity to those who have been left out. I ask my Republican colleagues to join the Democratic Congress in raising the minimum wage in January.

OPPOSING "RIGHT OF RETURN" REFERENCE IN THE IRAQ STUDY GROUP REPORT

(Mr. McHENRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McHENRY. Mr. Speaker, a curious section of the Iraq Study Group final report which was submitted to the President yesterday mentions the so-called Palestinian right of return demand, and says that it should be addressed in the negotiation process to stabilize Iraq.

I am concerned that many in the region, including groups opposed to Israel's very existence, will take this mention in the Iraq Study Group report as support of a full so-called right of return.